

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

D-1294DIV

PRINTING APPARATUS

Cross Reference to Related Application

5 This is a divisional application of a patent application
Serial No. 10/158,200 filed on May 31, 2002, Now PAT. NO. 6,796,732.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION AND RELATED ART STATEMENT

10 [0001] The present invention relates to a printing apparatus
for printing a variety of information such as images and
characters to a recording medium, such as a card, and more
particularly to a printing apparatus that is capable of
switching printing methods according to the characteristics of
the recording medium or the information that is to be recorded.

15 [0002] Conventionally, thermal transfer method printing
apparatuses that record desired images and characters by
thermally transferring with a thermal head via a thermal
transfer film to a recording medium are used to create card
shaped recording medium, like credit cards, cash cards, license
20 cards and ID cards. As an example, Japanese Patent Publication
(KOKAI) No. H9-131930 teaches a direct transfer method printing
apparatus that directly transfers images and characters to a
recording medium via thermal transfer film. The use of a thermal
sublimite ink has the benefit of attaining high quality images
25 because this type of ink is more expressive. However, a
receptive layer to receive ink on the surface of a recording
medium to which images, etc., are transferred is an essential
element to enable this method of printing, so a problem exists
in that either the type of recording medium that can be used is
30 limited, or it is necessary to form the aforementioned receptive